THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to sudden and unprecedented growth of air traffic, there is a requirement of additional trained air traffic controllers to man the newly established ATC work stations to handle the increased growth.

(b) and (c) During the last two and half years, 371 Junior Executives (ATC) have been inducted in Airports Authority of India (AAI). Action for filling up another 148 posts of JE (ATC) is in progress. AAI is also utilizing the services of retired ATCOs, wherever possible. It has been programmed to recruit 100 ATCOs every six months for a period of two years to meet the additional requirement.

Modernisation of Mumbai airport

308. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has pointed out that there have been some slippages in time in the modernisation work of the Mumbai airport;

(b) whether this problem has been referred to the GoM because a wider consultation was required on the matter; and

(c) if so, by what time final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) An Operation, Management and Development Agreement (OMDA) has been signed between the private operator M/s. Mumbai International Airport Private Limited (MIAL) and Airports Authority of India (AAI). Clause (8) of OMDA clearly stipulates various development works that are to be carried out by Mumbai International Airport Limited for modernization and development of the airport in a time bound manner. There is a Committee headed by Secretary (Civil Aviation) in the Ministry which oversees the implementation of OMDA.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Strike by ground staff of Indian

309. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 13,000 ground staff of Indian went on flash strike on 11th June, 2007 causing disruption of air services and lot of inconveniences to passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for not settling the long pending issues of ground staff that led to strike; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure smooth operation of Indian and proper service to passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air Corporations Employees Union (ACEU) representing around 12,200 employees, called for strike *w.e.f.* night shift of 12.6.2007 all over India. ACEU had been demanding revision of wages and allowances *w.e.f.* 1.1.1997 and better career progression. The negotiations in this regard were initiated way back in February, 2007 and when no satisfactory agreement was reached and the ACEU adopted an agitational approach, the matter was referred to the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) for conciliation. Even as the conciliation proceedings were underway with the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), the ACEU suddenly called for a flash strike. The strike was called off from the afternoon of 14th June, 2007 after tripartite discussions involving the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Management of Indian Airlines and the office bearers of ACEU.

(c) Indian Airlines being a Public Sector Enterprise, follows the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises on wages, allowances and other service conditions for its employees. The demands of ACEU with regard to wages and allowances were not in confirmity with these guidelines and Indian Airlines was not in a position to bear the high financial implications of these demands.

(d) Contingency plan was put into operation to deal with the situation and all efforts were made to ensure smooth operations of flights by deputing additional officers as well as engaging casuals and contract workers. To minimize/avoid harassment to customers, proper and timely dissemination of information regarding flight position was ensured through Indian Airlines' call centres.

Incidents of crash of helicopters

310. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that incidents of crash of helicopters in different parts of the country have increased during the last three years;

(b) if so, how many cases of minor and major accidents of helicopters have been reported during the last three years; and

(c) what are the results of the enquiries conducted by the DGCA and steps taken to prevent such mishaps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) During the last three years 7 accidents and 5 serious incidents to helicopters have been reported. 3 accidents and 1 serious incident has been reported in 2007 (till date). 1 accident and 1 serious incident were reported in 2006 and 3 accidents and 3 serious incidents were reported in 2005.

(c) All accidents/incidents are investigated as per the procedure contained in the Aircraft Rules and necessary corrective measures are taken based on the recommendations made in the investigation report to avoid recurrence of such mishaps.